

Buildings and constructions

Construction surveys

In 1935 Istat launched an ongoing survey on residential buildings, observing the number and main features of dwellings. This survey was marked by several changes over time. Until 1979 the survey was only partial¹ and was conducted on a quarterly basis, with surveyors collecting the information of interest directly from construction worksites, making use of habitability or usability licences and building permits records.

In 1980, taking into account the new regulations on soil suitability for building and the administrative procedures for the issuing of building permission², Istat launched a new monthly, total survey on construction activities. Data collection and control were assigned to municipal technical offices, with the aim of acquiring data relating to new projects for residential and non-residential buildings, along with details of extensions to existing buildings. For all these types of works a regular building permit or commencement notice (Dia) must be requested, issued and then picked up by the applicant from the competent municipal offices³. The survey unit is formed by a new building or an extension of the volume of an existing building, including among new buildings also demolished and completely reconstructed buildings⁴.

In 2005, the survey name was changed to *Rilevazione statistica dei permessi di costruire* (Survey on building permits). At the same time new questions were introduced and the definitions of variables were reviewed in order to bring them into line with Council Regulation no. 1165/1998/EC dated 19 May 1998 on short-term statistics and subsequent modifications and implementations thereof, which required European Union member states to submit quarterly statistical data to Eurostat within 90 days from the end of the reference period.

Municipal offices were assigned the task of monthly collecting survey forms, checking information accuracy, completing the relevant parts and transmitting forms to the Chambers of Commerce which, after additional accuracy and quality checks, send them on to Istat⁵.

From the beginning of 2010, the process of collecting information on building permits was largely revised, introducing two new forms – one on residential building and one on non-residential building. Furthermore, since July of the same year some municipalities have started experimentally filling in survey forms online, using the certified and secure Indata platform on Istat website.

¹ This survey covered provincial capitals and the largest municipalities.

² In compliance with Law no. 10/1977 (dated 28 January 1977, known as the *Bucalossi Law*).

³ The survey form was to be filled out by all applicants for building permits, holders of commencement notice (Dia) for new constructions or the extension of the volume of existing constructions, as also public authorities whose projects for buildings or extensions of public buildings were approved, in accordance with Article 7 of Presidential Decree no. 380/2001 (dated 6 June 2001). The forms were considered complete and ready for submission to Istat only after the construction project was approved and when planning permission was issued. Regarding Dias, in the absence of objections all requests were considered automatically approved 30 days after filing.

⁴ In the case of a single building permit covering several buildings or extensions, individual forms had to be filled out for each building.

⁵ In the case of absence of the construction permits in the month of reference, the Municipality was nonetheless required to report a null construction activity.